

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

In re Application of:	§	Filed: June 20, 2003
Chatterjee et al.	§	
	§	Group Art Unit: 2166
Serial No.: 10/600,390	§	
	§	Examiner: Elijah Stone Harper
Confirmation No.: 7557	§	

For: FEDERATED ANNOTATION BROWSER

MAIL STOP APPEAL BRIEF - PATENTS
Commissioner for Patents
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July 6, 2010	/Joseph Jong/
Date	Joseph Jong

APPEAL BRIEF

Applicants submit this Appeal Brief to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences on appeal from the decision of the Examiner of Group Art Unit 2166 dated February 19, 2010, finally rejecting claims 9, 11-18, 25, 36 and 37. The final rejection of claims 9, 11-18, 25, 36 and 37 is appealed. This Appeal Brief is believed to be timely since it is transmitted by the due date of July 5, 2010, as set by the filing of a Notice of Appeal on May 5, 2010.

Since an appeal brief fee in the amount of \$500 had been paid for a previous appeal that did not reach a Board Decision, the fees due for filing this appeal brief is the difference between the current fee of \$540 and the previously paid amount of \$500. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge \$40 to counsel's Deposit Account No. 09-0465 / ROC920030238US1 for filing this appeal brief, and for any other fees required to make this appeal brief timely and acceptable to the Office.

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Real Party in Interest

The present application has been assigned to International Business Machines Corporation, Armonk, New York.

Related Appeals and Interferences

Applicant asserts that no other appeals or interferences are known to the Applicant, the Applicant's legal representative, or assignee which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

Status of Claims

Claims 9, 11-18, 25, 36 and 37 are pending in the application. Claims 1-35 were originally presented in the application. Claims 36 and 37 have been added during prosecution. Claims 1-8, 10, 19-24 and 26-35 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 9, 11-18, 25, 36 and 37 stand finally rejected as discussed below. The final rejections of claims 9, 11-18, 25, 36 and 37 are appealed. The pending claims are shown in the attached Claims Appendix.

Status of Amendments

All claim amendments prior to the Final office Action have been entered by the Examiner. Proposed amendments to the claims after the final rejection were not entered.

Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

A. CLAIM 9 – INDEPENDENT

Claim 9 is directed to a system for sharing information between one or more users engaged in analyzing data. See Application, para. [0031]. The system includes a data store storing a plurality of data objects. The system also includes a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object. See Application, Fig. 2, element 120; para. [0045]. The system also includes an annotation store storing one or more annotations annotating the plurality of data objects edited by the plurality of different applications. See Application, Fig. 2, element 130; paras. [0049]-[0050]. The system also includes an annotation browser configured to access the annotation store and provide one or more graphical user interfaces for creating and viewing the one or more annotations. See Application, Fig. 2, element 126; para. [0049]. The annotation browser is configured to display the one or more annotations along with selectable links from each of the one or more annotations at least one of the plurality of data objects annotated by the respective annotation of the one or more annotations, wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective data object to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective data object. See Application, Fig. 2, element 126; paras. [0049] and [0123]-[0124].

B. CLAIM 25 - INDEPENDENT

Claim 25 is directed to a system that includes a data store storing a plurality of data objects. See Application, para. [0031]. The system also includes a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object. See Application, Fig. 2, element 120; para. [0045]. The system also includes an annotation

database storing a plurality of annotations, wherein the plurality of annotations is stored separately from the plurality of data objects. See Application, Fig. 2, element 130; paras. [0049]-[0050]. The system also includes a set of data object points, each data object point comprising an annotatable portion of one of the plurality of data objects, wherein one or more of the set of data object points is annotated by one or more of the plurality of annotations. See Application, Fig. 3A, elements 117 and 113; paras. [0056]-[0058]. The system also includes a set of annotation structures, each defining a set of annotation fields selected to capture annotations of a specific type of data object point. See Application, para. [0095]. The system also includes a set of plug-in components, each interfacing between one or more annotation applications and an annotation server, wherein the annotation server is configured to: (i) receive, via the plug-in components, requests to access the plurality of annotations, the requests issued by the one or more annotation applications and (ii) generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with one or more of the set of data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for one or more of the set of data object points. See Application, Fig. 2, element 122; para. [0048]; Fig. 3A, element 140; paras. [0046] and [0095]-[0099]. The system also includes a browser application configured to browse the plurality of annotations in the annotation database, wherein the browser application is configured to: (i) access the plurality of annotations independently of the annotation applications in which the plurality of annotations were created and (ii) display the plurality of annotations along with selectable links from each of the plurality of annotations to at least one data object point annotated by each annotation. See Application, Fig. 2, element 126; para. [0049]. Selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective annotated data object point to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective annotated data object. See Application, Fig. 2, element 126; paras. [0049] and [0123]-[0124].

C. CLAIM 36 - INDEPENDENT

Claim 36 is directed to a system that includes an annotation server, a client computer, and a communications network providing connectivity between the client computer and the annotation server. See Application, para. [0031]. The annotation server includes an annotation database storing a plurality of annotations, a data store storing a plurality of data objects, and a set of data object points, each data object point being an annotatable portion of one of the plurality of data objects, wherein one or more of the set of data object points is annotated by one or more of the plurality of annotations. See Application, Fig. 2, element 130; paras. [0049]-[0050]; Fig. 3A, elements 117 and 113; paras. [0056]-[0058]. The annotation server also includes a set of index tables indexing the one or more of the set of data object points annotated by the one or more of the plurality of annotations, wherein each index table corresponds to a different type of data object point. See Application, Fig. 4C, element 460; para [0078]. The annotation server also includes a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object. See Application, Fig. 2, element 120; para. [0045]. The annotation server also includes a set of annotation structures, each defining a set of annotation fields selected to capture annotations of a specific type of data object point, and each corresponding to a specific combination of user role and data scope. See Application, para. [0095]. The annotation server also includes a set of administration tools configured for creating and modifying the set of annotation structures. The client computer includes a set of plug-in components, each interfacing between one or more annotation applications and the annotation server, wherein the annotation server is configured to: (i) receive, via the plug-in components, requests to access the plurality of annotations, the requests issued by the one or more annotation applications and (ii) generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with one or more of the set of data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for one or more of the set of data object points. See Application, Fig. 2, element 122; para. [0048]; Fig. 3A, element 140; paras. [0046] and [0095]-[0099]. The client computer also includes an annotation broker managing messages

passing between the annotation server and the set of plug-in components. The client computer also includes a browser application configured to browse the plurality of annotations, wherein the browser application is configured to: (i) access the plurality of annotations independently of the annotation applications in which the plurality of annotations were created and (ii) display the plurality of annotations along with selectable links from each of the plurality of annotations to at least one data object point annotated by each annotation. See Application, Fig. 2, element 126; para. [0049]. Selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective annotated data object point to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective annotated data object. See Application, Fig. 2, element 126; paras. [0049] and [0123]-[0124].

D. CLAIM 37 - INDEPENDENT

Claim 37 is directed to a system that includes a data store storing a plurality of data objects and a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object. See Application, Fig. 2, element 120; paras. [0031] and [0045]. The system also includes an annotation database storing a plurality of annotations, wherein the plurality of annotations is stored separately from the plurality of data objects. See Application, Fig. 2, element 130; paras. [0049]-[0050]. The system also includes a set of data object points, each data object point comprising an annotatable portion of one of the plurality of data objects, wherein one or more of the set of data object points is annotated by one or more of the plurality of annotations. See Application, Fig. 3A, elements 117 and 113; paras. [0056]-[0058]. The system also includes a set of index tables indexing the one or more of the set of data object points annotated by the one or more of the plurality of annotations, wherein each index table corresponds to a different type of data object point. See Application, Fig. 4C, element 460; para [0078]. The system also includes a set of annotation structures, each defining a set of annotation fields selected to capture annotations of a specific type of

data object point. See Application, para. [0095]. The system also includes a set of plug-in components, each interfacing between one or more annotation applications and an annotation server, wherein the annotation server is configured to: (i) receive, via the plug-in components, requests to access the plurality of annotations, the requests issued by the one or more annotation applications and (ii) generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with one or more of the set of data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for one or more of the set of data object points. See Application, Fig. 2, element 122; para. [0048]; Fig. 3A, element 140; paras. [0046] and [0095]-[0099]. The system also includes a browser application configured to browse the plurality of annotations in the annotation database, wherein the browser application is configured to: (i) access the plurality of annotations independently of the annotation applications in which the plurality of annotations were created and (ii) display the plurality of annotations along with selectable links from each of the plurality of annotations to at least one data object point annotated by each annotation. See Application, Fig. 2, element 126; paras. [0049] and [0123]-[0124]. Selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective annotated data object point to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective annotated data object. See Application, Fig. 2, element 126; paras. [0049] and [0123]-[0124]. Further, the browser application is configured to display a first annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has a single annotation and a second annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has multiple annotations, wherein the browser application is configured to display a first portion of annotation data from an annotation, in response to a user positioning a cursor over an associated annotation icon, and wherein the browser application is further configured to, in response to the user selecting the annotation icon, display a second portion of annotation data from the annotation. See Application, Fig. 9B, element 150; para. [0118].

Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

1. Rejection of claims 9, 11-18 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Eintracht et al.*, US 6687878 (hereinafter *Eintracht*) in view of *Davis et al.*, US 7010144 (hereinafter *Davis*).

ARGUMENTS

1. Rejection of claims 9, 11-18 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Eintracht* in view of *Davis*.

The Applicable Law

The Examiner bears the initial burden of establishing a prima facie case of obviousness. See MPEP § 2141. Establishing a prima facie case of obviousness begins with first resolving the factual inquiries of *Graham v. John Deere Co.* 383 U.S. 1 (1966). The factual inquiries are as follows:

- (A) determining the scope and content of the prior art;
- (B) ascertaining the differences between the claimed invention and the prior art;
- (C) resolving the level of ordinary skill in the art; and
- (D) considering any objective indicia of nonobviousness.

Once the *Graham* factual inquiries are resolved, the Examiner must determine whether the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Applicants' Response to the Examiner's Argument

Respectfully, Applicants submit that the Office has not properly characterized the teachings of the references and/or the claims at issue. Accordingly, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established.

For example, the Office suggests that *Davis* discloses annotation browser user interfaces for viewing annotations to data objects. Specifically, the Office suggests that *Davis* discloses the limitations of “an annotation browser configured to . . . provide one or more graphical user interfaces for creating and viewing the one or more annotations [annotating a plurality of data objects edited by a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing]” and “wherein the annotation browser is configured to display the one or more annotations along with selectable links from each of the one or more annotations to at

least one of the plurality of data objects annotated by the respective annotation of the one or more annotations.” Specifically, the Office states:

Davis however does disclose: the annotation store and provide one or more graphical user interfaces for creating and viewing the one or more annotations (See column 2 lines 40-50)

Davis however does disclose . . . wherein the annotation browser is configured to display the one or more annotations along with selectable links from each of the one or more annotations to at least one of the plurality of data objects annotated by the respective annotation of the one or more annotations (See column 6 lines 14-24)

Office Action, pp. 3-4. For convenience, the cited portions of *Davis* are provided below:

In other applications, it is useful to store additional data elsewhere, and refer to it through a reference hidden in the image.

One way to associate data with an image is to store the data in the image container (e.g., a file), but outside the image. Yet another way is store the data in a location external to the image file, and create an association between the image file and the external data. In this case, the image may be associated with the external data via a reference encoded in the image itself or in the image file that refers to the external data. Data associated with a digital object, such as an image, is sometimes referred to as “metadata.”

For the class of photographers the scrollable list of selections can include a default list of descriptors (e.g., Mom, Dad, Child1, Child2, #1, #2, etc.), supplemented (or replaced if desired) by a list that is customized by the owner of the camera (e.g., Bill, Kristen, Hannah, David, etc.).

The class of subjects can similarly include a default list (e.g., Birthday, Vacation, Anniversary, Wedding, House, Car, Pet, etc.) and/or a customized list (Uncle Harry, Yellowstone, Mushrooms, Seascapes, etc.)

The user interface for selection of subjects may permit selection of several subjects – providing alternate descriptors for an image.

Davis, col. 2, lines 40-50; col. 6, lines 14-24. Generally, *Davis* is directed to associating metadata with graphical images. See *Davis*, Abstract. In this regard, the Office is suggesting that the *metadata* of *Davis* teaches the recited annotations and that the *graphical images* of *Davis* teach the recited data object. The cited portions of *Davis* disclose a scrollable list of predefined metadata from which a user may select to associate with a graphical image. See *Davis*, col. 6, lines 14-24. Respectfully, *Davis* fails to disclose any annotation browser that *displays* the metadata that has an association with graphical images and selectable links from each of the metadata to at least one of the graphical images. Instead, the cited portions of *Davis* disclose a

graphical user interface from which a user may select predefined metadata that is *not yet* associated with *any* graphical image. That is, at the time that the user selects from the predefined metadata in *Davis*, the predefined metadata does not have any association with a graphical image. In contrast, the claims are directed to annotations that have an association with an underlying data object. *Davis* simply does not teach any user interface for viewing annotations that have an association with underlying data objects. In this regard, the Final Office Action states:

Davis discloses that the image metadata may be associated with an image in 1 of two ways either the metadata is stored directly into the file or the metadata is stored outside of the image in an external location with an associated link between the metadata and the image file.

Final Office Action, p. 18. However, the cited portion of *Davis* merely describes different ways of associating the metadata with an image. The cited portion of *Davis* does not disclose any user interface for viewing metadata that has an association with graphical images. Further, the claims recite a user interface for viewing metadata associated with objects edited by a plurality of different applications . . . wherein each application performs a different type of editing. Respectfully, even assuming, *arguendo*, that *Davis* teaches an image editing application associated with the images, *Davis* still fails to teach a second type of application that performs a different type of editing, as required by the claims. For the reasons given above, *Davis* fails to disclose at least “an annotation browser configured to . . . provide one or more graphical user interfaces for creating and viewing the one or more annotations” and “wherein the annotation browser is configured to display the one or more annotations along with selectable links from each of the one or more annotations to at least one of the plurality of data objects annotated by the respective annotation of the one or more annotations.” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection should be reversed.

Further, the Office suggests that *Davis* discloses “wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective data object to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective data object.” Specifically, the Office states:

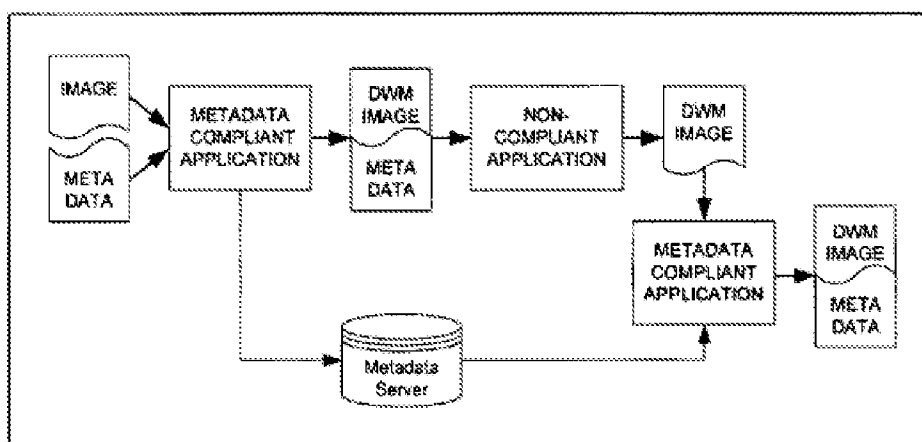
Davis however does disclose . . . wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective data object to be invoked according to the defined relationship between

the respective application and the respective data object (See column 3 lines 15-20 and figure 3 noting that the application must be compliant application).

Office Action, pp. 3-4. For convenience, the cited portions of *Davis* are provided below:

Alternatively, the data items may be kept in storage external to the image capture device and associated with selected images by reference, such as through an identifier that matches an identifier hidden in the image. For example, the camera or some other image management system can insert a steganographic link (e.g., in an image watermark) that associates the image with the desired data items.

Fig. 3



Davis, col. 3, lines 15-20; Fig. 3. Generally, *Davis* teaches that an image viewer that adheres to standard guidelines for maintaining image metadata may *embed* metadata in a graphical image. The image viewer may also steganographically hide an *identifier* in the graphical image. Should a non-compliant application ever remove or corrupt the embedded metadata, the identifier may be used to retrieve a copy of the metadata (from the metadata server) to *restore* the embedded metadata in the graphical image. Respectfully, *Davis* fails to disclose displaying image metadata and a selectable link from the image metadata to graphical image, as required by the claims. Further, *Davis* also fails to disclose that *selecting* any one of the selectable links causes an application for editing graphical images to be invoked. In this regard, the Final Office Action states:

In this case *Davis* discloses that descriptors can be selected by the users. The descriptors are encoded into the images and are associated with the metadata. (See column lines 22-26).

Final Office Action, p. 19. The cited portion of *Davis* is provided below:

For the class of photographers, the scrollable list of selections can include a default list of descriptors (e.g., Mom, Dad, Child1, Child2, #1, #2, etc.), supplemented (or replaced if desired) by a list that is customized by the owner of the camera (e.g., Bill, Kristen, Hannah, David, etc.).

The class of subjects can similarly include a default list (e.g., Birthday, Vacation, Anniversary, Wedding, House, Car, Pet, etc.) and/or a customized list (Uncle Harry, Yellowstone, Mushrooms, Seascapes, etc.) The user interface for selection of subjects may permit selection of several subjects--providing alternate descriptors for an image. A descriptor selected by the user can be used to encode the picture just-snapped, or can be used to encode pictures thereafter-snapped. A descriptor embedded in the image may be in the form of text, or a number that refers to metadata stored outside the image.

Davis, col. 6, lines 14-29 (emphasis added). *Davis* teaches that an image may include an embedded descriptor – which may include either text or a reference to the text stored outside the image. Respectfully, *Davis* fails to teach that selecting the text (or the reference to the text) causes a respective application for editing the image to be invoked according to the predefined relationship, as claimed. Therefore, *Davis* fails to disclose “wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective data object to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective data object.” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection should be reversed.

Further, regarding claim 37, the Office suggests that *Eintracht* discloses “wherein the browser application is configured to display a first annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has a single annotation and a second annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has multiple annotations.” Specifically, the Office states:

As for claim 37 *Eintracht* discloses . . . wherein the annotation browser is configured to display a first annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has a single annotation and a second annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has multiple annotations (See column 14 lines 29-34).

Office Action, pp.12-13. For convenience, the cited portion of *Eintracht* is provided below:

If the number of notes is not equal to zero, the client checks the state of the viewing condition flag in the web browser Note Plug-In application. This variable may have the following values; show document only

(corresponding to FIG. 1A), show document in addition to notes (corresponding to FIG. 1B), show document and notes in one web browser frame and a list of notes in another web browser frame (corresponding to FIG. 1C).

Eintracht, col. 14, lines 26-34. Generally, *Eintracht* is directed to synchronizing annotations from multiple clients. Respectfully, *Eintracht* fails to disclose displaying a first icon to indicate that a document has a single note and displaying a second icon to indicate that a document has multiple notes. Therefore, *Eintracht* fails to teach “wherein the browser application is configured to display a first annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has a single annotation and a second annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has multiple annotations.” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection should be reversed with respect to claim 37.

CONCLUSION

The Office errs in finding that claims 9, 11-18 and 25 are unpatentable over *Eintracht* in view of *Davis* under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of all claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted, and
S-signed pursuant to 37 CFR 1.4,

/Gero G. MCCLELLAN, Reg. #44,227/

Gero G. McClellan
Registration No. 44,227
Patterson & Sheridan, L.L.P.
3040 Post Oak Blvd. Suite 1500
Houston, TX 77056
Telephone: (713) 623-4844
Facsimile: (713) 623-4846
Attorney for Appellants

CLAIMS APPENDIX

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) A system for sharing information between one or more users engaged in analyzing data, comprising:

- a data store storing a plurality of data objects;
- a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object;
- an annotation store storing one or more annotations annotating the plurality of data objects edited by the plurality of different applications;
- an annotation browser configured to access, by operation of one or more computer processors, the annotation store and provide one or more graphical user interfaces for creating and viewing the one or more annotations wherein the annotation browser is configured to display the one or more annotations along with selectable links from each of the one or more annotations at least one of the plurality of data objects annotated by the respective annotation of the one or more annotations; and wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective data object to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective data object.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display data and indications of what displayed data has one or more corresponding annotations.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display one or more annotation icons proximate to an annotated data object.
13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein:
at least one common annotation describes more than one data object; and
the annotation browser is configured to display a common annotation icon proximate to data objects described by the common annotation.
14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display different annotation icons proximate to data objects described by different annotations.
15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display a first annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has a single annotation and a second annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has multiple annotations.
16. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display a first portion of annotation data from an annotation, in response to a user positioning a cursor over an associated annotation icon.
17. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the annotation browser is further configured to, in response to the user selecting the annotation icon, display a second portion of annotation data from the annotation.
18. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein the annotation browser is further configured to, in response to the user selecting the annotation icon, retrieve the second portion of annotation data from the annotation store.
- 19-24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising:
- a data store storing a plurality of data objects;
 - a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object;
 - an annotation database storing a plurality of annotations, wherein the plurality of annotations are stored separately from the plurality of data objects;
 - a set of data object points, each data object point comprising an annotatable portion of one of the plurality of data objects, wherein one or more of the set of data object points is annotated by one or more of the plurality of annotations;
 - a set of annotation structures, each defining a set of annotation fields selected to capture annotations of a specific type of data object point;
 - a set of plug-in components, each interfacing between one or more annotation applications and an annotation server, wherein the annotation server is configured to: (i) receive, via the plug-in components, requests to access the plurality of annotations, the requests issued by the one or more annotation applications and (ii) generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with one or more of the set of data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for one or more of the set of data object points; and
 - a browser application configured to browse the plurality of annotations in the annotation database, wherein the browser application is configured to:
 - (i) access, by operation of one or more computer processors, the plurality of annotations independently of the annotation applications in which the plurality of annotations were created and
 - (ii) display the plurality of annotations along with selectable links from each of the plurality of annotations to at least one data object point annotated by each annotation, wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective annotated data object point to be

invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective annotated data object.

26-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising:
- an annotation server, comprising:
 - an annotation database storing a plurality of annotations;
 - a data store storing a plurality of data objects;
 - a set of data object points, each data object point being an annotatable portion of one of the plurality of data objects, wherein one or more of the set of data object points is annotated by one or more of the plurality of annotations;
 - a set of index tables indexing the one or more of the set of data object points annotated by the one or more of the plurality of annotations, wherein each index table corresponds to a different type of data object point;
 - a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object;
 - a set of annotation structures, each defining a set of annotation fields selected to capture annotations of a specific type of data object point, and each corresponding to a specific combination of user role and data scope; and
 - a set of administration tools configured for creating and modifying the set of annotation structures;
 - a client computer, comprising:
 - a set of plug-in components, each interfacing between one or more annotation applications and the annotation server, wherein the annotation server is configured to:
 - (i) receive, via the plug-in components, requests to access the plurality of annotations, the requests issued by the one or more annotation applications and

- (ii) generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with one or more of the set of data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for one or more of the set of data object points;
 - an annotation broker managing messages passing between the annotation server and the set of plug-in components; and
 - a browser application configured to browse the plurality of annotations, wherein the browser application is configured to:
 - (i) access, by operation of one or more computer processors, the plurality of annotations independently of the annotation applications in which the plurality of annotations were created and
 - (ii) display the plurality of annotations along with selectable links from each of the plurality of annotations to at least one data object point annotated by each annotation, wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective annotated data object point to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective annotated data object; and
 - a communications network providing connectivity between the client computer and the annotation server.
37. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising:
- a data store storing a plurality of data objects;
 - a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object;
 - an annotation database storing a plurality of annotations, wherein the plurality of annotations are stored separately from the plurality of data objects;

a set of data object points, each data object point comprising an annotatable portion of one of the plurality of data objects, wherein one or more of the set of data object points is annotated by one or more of the plurality of annotations;

a set of index tables indexing the one or more of the set of data object points annotated by the one or more of the plurality of annotations, wherein each index table corresponds to a different type of data object point;

a set of annotation structures, each defining a set of annotation fields selected to capture annotations of a specific type of data object point;

a set of plug-in components, each interfacing between one or more annotation applications and an annotation server, wherein the annotation server is configured to:

(i) receive, via the plug-in components, requests to access the plurality of annotations, the requests issued by the one or more annotation applications and

(ii) generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with one or more of the set of data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for one or more of the set of data object points; and

a browser application configured to browse the plurality of annotations in the annotation database, wherein the browser application is configured to:

(i) access, by operation of one or more computer processors, the plurality of annotations independently of the annotation applications in which the plurality of annotations were created and

(ii) display the plurality of annotations along with selectable links from each of the plurality of annotations to at least one data object point annotated by each annotation, wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective annotated data object point to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective annotated data object, wherein the browser application is configured to display a first annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has a single annotation and a second annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has multiple annotations, wherein the browser application is configured to display a first portion of annotation data from an annotation, in response to

a user positioning a cursor over an associated annotation icon, and
wherein the browser application is further configured to, in response to the
user selecting the annotation icon, display a second portion of annotation
data from the annotation.

EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None.

RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.